



Responses to caBIG™ Support Service Provider Program questions

1. Does NCI plan to forward requests for help and questions from the caBIG community to the approved service providers? In other words, will the NCI help identify "leads" for the service providers?

The caBIG™ program will direct requests for help to the Support Service Provider page on the caBIG™ community website, which will have links to licensed Support Service Providers according to Service Category.

2. Will approved service providers receive any priority for compliance evaluation?

No, approved Support Service Providers will not receive any priority for compliance or compatibility evaluation.

3. Proposal delivery instructions on top of page two are not clear. Can proposals be delivered either email or hardcopy or is the government expecting both? Can you please clarify how will email submittals be stamped? Via the time sent or received in the recipient's mail box?

Proposals may be delivered either electronically to caBIG_SSP@mail.nih.gov or in hardcopy. Electronic submission is preferred. Email submissions will be time-stamped with the time sent.

4. Regarding Evaluation Criteria for Adaptation and Enhancement of caBIG™-Compatible Software Applications: Staffing and scalability section c, the government has indicated they are looking for submission of representative staff resumes. With the page constraints indicated on page 5, is the government expecting resumes to be included in the page constraint, attached to proposals or was this a possible oversight in the text. Please advise.

Representative resumes should be attached to the proposal and will not be included in the page count with respect to the limit constraints.

5. Will this be the only opportunity to apply to participate in the caBIG™ Support Service Provider Program, or will this process be repeated again in the future? Would future applications be based on the calendar (i.e., annually) or based on needs for additional Service Providers?

There are likely to be future opportunities to participate in the caBIG™ Support Service Provider program. Future opportunities for application will be based upon the needs of the program.

6. Will licensed Service Providers gain any benefit other than use of the caBIG™ license in one or more Service Categories? For example, it has been suggested that NCI provide a forum (via web or conference) for Service Providers to connect with organizations that need services. Furthermore, will Service Providers be listed by NCI on websites or other publications? Will they be noted separately from other vendors at the caBIG™ Annual Meeting or other NCI sponsored events?

As described in Question 1 above, there will be a Support Service Provider web page on the caBIG™ community website and caBIG participants seeking Support Service will be directed there. Licensed Support Service Providers will also have special designations at caBIG™ meetings, to include the caBIG™ Annual Meeting. The creation of an SSP forum is not currently planned.

7. If an organization does not respond to this RFA in one or more Service Categories, will there be an opportunity in the future to apply? If so, will this correspond with the yearly renewal? Will NCI be reissuing this RFA on a regular basis? If so, will NCI be publishing the dates?

See the answer to Question 5 above.

8. The RFA claims that NCI will be managing the Service Provider program. Does this entail any activities beyond reviewing applications to the RFA and renewal applications? Will the Service Providers be responsible for any other activities?

In managing the caBIG[™] Support Service Provider program, NCI will review initial applications, provide access to caBIG[™] Service Support Providers through the caBIG[™] community website and review performance for continued use of the caBIG[™] trademark. . Renewal criteria will be based on demonstrated adherence to the terms and conditions of the license and continued maintenance of high quality services, assessed in part through feedback from customers of caBIG[™] Support Service Providers.

9. The RFA states that NCI may limit the number of Service Providers. Can NCI provide a ballpark estimate of the number of Service Providers it thinks that it can effectively steward? Is the expectation that the application will be highly competitive?

The total number of Support Service Provider licenses that will be awarded is dependent on the coverage of Service Categories and other factors though, as stated in the announcement, there are no pre-set limits on the numbers of providers for each category. The strength of each organization's application will be considered against the evaluation criteria.

10. Are applicants that are applying for more than one Service Category expected to submit separate documents for each Service Category, one document with a single background section and multiple 7 page maximum response sections (one per category), or some other formula that includes 3 pages for extra categories?

As stated in the announcement, organizations that wish to apply for more than one Service Category should submit separate applications for each Service Category and each document must be no longer than the stated page limits.

11. The RFA indicates that applicants should submit a proposal for evaluating customer satisfaction. Is this to be included in the 7 page response or as an attachment? What level of detail would NCI like to see in this proposal?

Proposals for evaluating customer satisfaction should be included within the 7 page response. The level of detail requested is that which will be sufficient to judge the coverage, resources, frequency, and adequacy of the evaluation proposed.

12. The RFA indicates that applications should submit a template service contract. Is this included in the 7 page response or as an attachment? What level of detail is NCI looking for? Is there a model service contract that NCI can provide or any other guidance NCI can give on drafting this document?

The template service contract should be attached to the proposal and will not be included in the page count with respect to the limit constraints. The level of detail requested is that which would be normally found in an executed service contract and should include the specific components listed under each Service Category in the announcement, which are different for each category.

13. The RFA indicates that applications should submit a staffing plan. Is this included in the 7 page response or as an attachment? What level of detail is NCI looking for?

The staffing plan should be included within the 7 page response limit. The staffing plan should address the organization's ability to apply the appropriate number of staff with the necessary skills and experience as well as address the scalability necessary for the long-term success of the program.

14. In the section "Evaluation Criteria for Adaptation and Enhancement of caBIG-Compatible Software Applications", applicants are required to submit a set of representative resumes for staff with experience in the various components of the caBIG technology stack. Should these be included as an attachment or as part of the 7 page proposal?

See the answer to Question 4 above.

15. We have heard in the VCDE WS that many of the review activities of the workspace will be taken over by the SSP. However, the Solicitation issued on April 25, 2008 does not appear to mention these. What is, or will be, the inclusion of VCDE review activities in the scope of the SSP Program?

VCDE Review activities are not within the scope of the Support Service Provider program.

16. What will be the process for candidate service providers to apply for certification?

Licensed Support Service Providers will follow the same process as entities applying for compatibility certification as in Question 2 above.

17. What will be the evaluation process for applicants interested in providing those activities to the caBIG community?

VCDE review activities are outside the scope of this announcement.

18. Under categories with Geographic Coverage as an evaluation criteria, will there be opportunities for organizations to be designated as Service Providers for regions - i.e. an East Coast or Mid-Atlantic Support Provider?

Applicants that cannot provide support to the entire geographic US should list the regions which they are able to support. However, at this time no organizations will be designated as the sole Service Provider for a given region.

19. Would support include other NCI or caBIG[™] applications and/or technologies besides those listed in the bundles?

Applicants should list the caBIG[™] applications and/or technologies that they are able to support. It is not expected that every successful applicant will be able to support all caBIG-compatible applications and/or technologies.

20. Do the 3 pages of background material need to be the same across an applicant's separate applications for each category?

The background materials section is not required to be the same for each separate Service Category application.



21. For the deployment support category, is offering hosting/ASP right away a requirement for certification? This would substantially increase the initial investment required (vs only providing local deployment services) to get certified with uncertain return, especially if it needs to be 21 CFR 11/GxP compliant. If it is, is there any data available on how many cancer centers might want to use this option?

The specific evaluation criterion is to “demonstrate ability to provide IT systems as an application service provider (ASP).” It is not expected that a Support Service Provider in this Service Category will offer ASP service before market demands support such an offering.

22. For Staffing and Scalability, is there a target minimum size below which NCI anticipates that applicants would be effectively disqualified from consideration?

There is no minimum size for staffing, but staffing should be sufficient to meet the support criteria described in the Service Category applied for. A scalability plan should also be proposed.

23. How many Support Service Providers does NCI anticipate selecting? Is there a goal or a target number of providers?

See the answer to Question 9 above.

24. Can a respondent specify a limited set of the caBIG domain (e.g. clinical trials) for which they propose to offer support within a particular service category? Similarly, can they restrict their application to a limited set of applications within the domain? Or are they required to provide support across all caBIG applications and domain workspaces?

Respondents may specify a limited set for which they propose support. See also the answer to Question 19 above.

25. For communicating with caBIG workspace officers, are official service providers allowed to post information on caBIG website?

Service Providers may not post information on the caBIG™ community website. Points of contact for relevant workspaces and activities are currently provided on the caBIG™ community website and successful applicants will be encouraged to participate in workspace activities.

26. Recently there was a solicitation under DSIC. Is this not redundant?

The solicitation for the Data Sharing and Intellectual Capital Knowledge Center describes different activities and levels of support than those of the Service Support Provider announcement.

27. What does technical mentoring mean as a form of training service?

Technical mentoring refers to providing guidance and support to customers developing technologies and methods in compliance with caBIG™ standards and practices so as to meet requirements for compatibility and/or certification.

28. Please define the meaning of "representative resumes" Do these refer to a specific person?

“Representative resumes” refer to resumes submitted to demonstrate the skills and experience of staff that will fill specific roles.



29. Amongst the list of evaluation criteria if a specific requirement is not meant by the applicant, does it mean that the application is disqualified?

As described in the announcement, applicants will be evaluated against the stated criteria and will then be ranked against other applicants in the service categories to determine the field of initially qualified applicants. Applicants will not be disqualified on the basis of a single criterion.

30. Are there any sample reports for template service contract?

No sample reports are available for the template service contract. See also the answer to Question 12 above.

31. We are interested in becoming a service provider by responding to the Adaptation and Enhancement of caBIG Compatible software applications part of this RFP. Do we need to demonstrate knowledge of all the applications in the LSD bundle and the CCTS bundles?

See the answer to Question 19 above.

Responses to questions received related to licensing will be provided shortly.